

CHRIST TEACHING BY PARABLES.

When Christ wished to say anything plainly and forcibly it was his custom to use some parable, which could be employed to bring the thought more clearly before the minds of his hearers.

The parables which was made use of on this occasion, was spoken, together with many others, on the afternoon of a very busy day. It was the same day, at the close of which, Jesus made a voyage across the sea of Galilee, and while he was calmly sleeping a tempest arose, which though it was so severe that it greatly alarmed the others on the ship, did not arouse his weary body from its slumbers.

But, let us notice the meaning of the word "parable." A parable is an allegorical expression or representation in life or nature, from which a moral is drawn for instruction, or in other words it denotes a form of instruction in which by the side of the truth is placed the image which represents it.

Let us next notice the character of the parable spoken here. "A sower went forth to sow." We find here that if we would sow that we must go forth. If we would do good in the world that we must make some effort and go out amid the temptations and trials with a purpose to find the fields in which to labor, seeking for opportunities to sow the good seed and not wait for the fields to come to us. For if we wait for the fields to come to us we will be sure to remain idle and to die without having sown any good seed.

There are many ways by which we may scatter the seed of truth, all of which are necessary if we would reap a bountiful harvest.

We may sow the seed by our daily life and character: We may sow the seed by precept, but sowing and teaching by precept and not by example is sure, at the time of the harvest to be barren of those good results which follow a life spent in earnest labor for the cause of righteousness.

"And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside and the fowls of the air devoured it."

This has reference to those who hear the word of God, but either do not understand it or do not heed it. Their

minds and hearts are so fully occupied with the business and pleasures of this world that they do not seem to have any room for the impression of God's truth.

Evil habits, profanity and wicked thoughts have so trampled the soil of their hearts that the good seed which may chance to fall there is overcome by the much stronger power which has almost absolute control of them.

"And some fell upon a rock and as soon as it was sprung up it withered away because it lacked moisture."

We find this can be applied to those who hear the Gospel preached and hail it with joy and gladness. Their hearts seem to be touched but their sinful nature remains unchanged.

"They on the rock are they which, when they hear, receive the word with joy and these have no root, which, for a little while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." When trials, afflictions and persecutions come they seem to be unable to withstand the powerful evil influences of Satan and they soon seem to lose all of their once exultant joy and happy feeling. As long as they are in the popular current and nothing comes in their way or interferes with their principles they appear all right and seem to be entirely satisfied.

But as soon as any real test comes and trials present themselves, and difficulties come before them to be surmounted and sacrifices are required to be made they fall away and soon are back in their old sinful ways again.

"And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it."

"And they which fell among thorns are they, which when they have heard go forth and are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life and bring no fruit to perfection."

This class of people give a somewhat brighter promise than those which are represented by the seed falling on stony ground. They make a profession of religion and to all outward appearances they seem to live christian lives. But their hearts are set on things which are far from pertaining to the religion of Jesus Christ.

Their hearts' chief desire seems to be, not to live lives commendable in the

sight of God, but to gain favor and popular feeling with man.

Their whole mind seems to be absorbed and enraptured with the thought of how to obtain riches and honor. These things are all right in their place but they should be subordinated to higher and nobler desires and purposes. When they put too much trust in riches they learn that they are being deceived. For we are warned against the deceitfulness of riches. They deceive us by giving out the thought that they are able to bestow what they cannot and will not give, by making things seem to be truthful and honest, when they are nothing but deception and dishonesty. And thus continually leading men on in the search of blessings and treasures which elude them.

But it is not the riches itself that makes men unfruitful but it is the constant longing and desire to obtain them. If all men would consider the proverb "the love of money is the root of all evil" and act accordingly, there would be a great deal more honesty and the world would be a great deal better than what it is.

And now let us notice the result at the time of the harvest of the seed which was sown amid thorns. "And bring no fruit to perfection." They bear but few of the fruits of the spirit and those which they do bear are weak, imperfect and undeveloped. And why is it? It is not the cause of the soil for the soil was fertile. It was not the fault of the seed for the seed was good. But it was the fault of the thorns growing up and choking the tender plants of truth and righteousness sown in their hearts. We should therefore take good care of the seed which is sown in our hearts and watch and pray that the thorns will not get the advantage of us and thus destroy our good talents and blight our spiritual nature.

Then again we have another class of persons represented by the seed which fell on good ground.

"And other fell on good ground and sprang up, and bare fruit a hundred fold." By this is meant those who hear the word and obey it and follow its precepts.

Whenever any temptations and persecutions confront them they bravely